

Transportation

- Develop system wide improvements for the Mercer/Valley corridor including support of the South lake Union Park Master Plan
- Conduct parking study and develop parking plan for South Lake Union

South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan

Planning Process

The South Lake Union Transportation Subcommittee was formed from the South Lake Union Planning Organization and has concentrated efforts on identifying issues related to circulation, parking and transit.

Background: Transportation recommendations developed, by the SLUPCOM Transportation Committee address a wide range of issues and needs in the neighborhood including circulation, parking and transit. Two recommendations represent key activities that will assist the neighborhood in managing future development. The first key activity involves the development of a set of improvements for the Mercer/Valley corridor that can be accomplished as a package or independently. Such improvements would be in lieu of any major, grand expressway type scheme to deal with traffic in the corridor.

The second key activity involves the development of a comprehensive parking study for the neighborhood. Parking dynamics vary considerably throughout the neighborhood and need to be evaluated in sufficient detail to assure that both the problems and potential solutions are properly identified.

Discussion of Key or Integrated Planned Activities for Transportation

Mercer/Valley Corridor: The South Lake Union Plan places high emphasis on addressing traffic issues in the Mercer/Valley corridor. Through numerous discussions and much observation and analysis, it has become clear that achieving resolution on an approach to Mercer/Valley traffic produces benefits in many areas including:

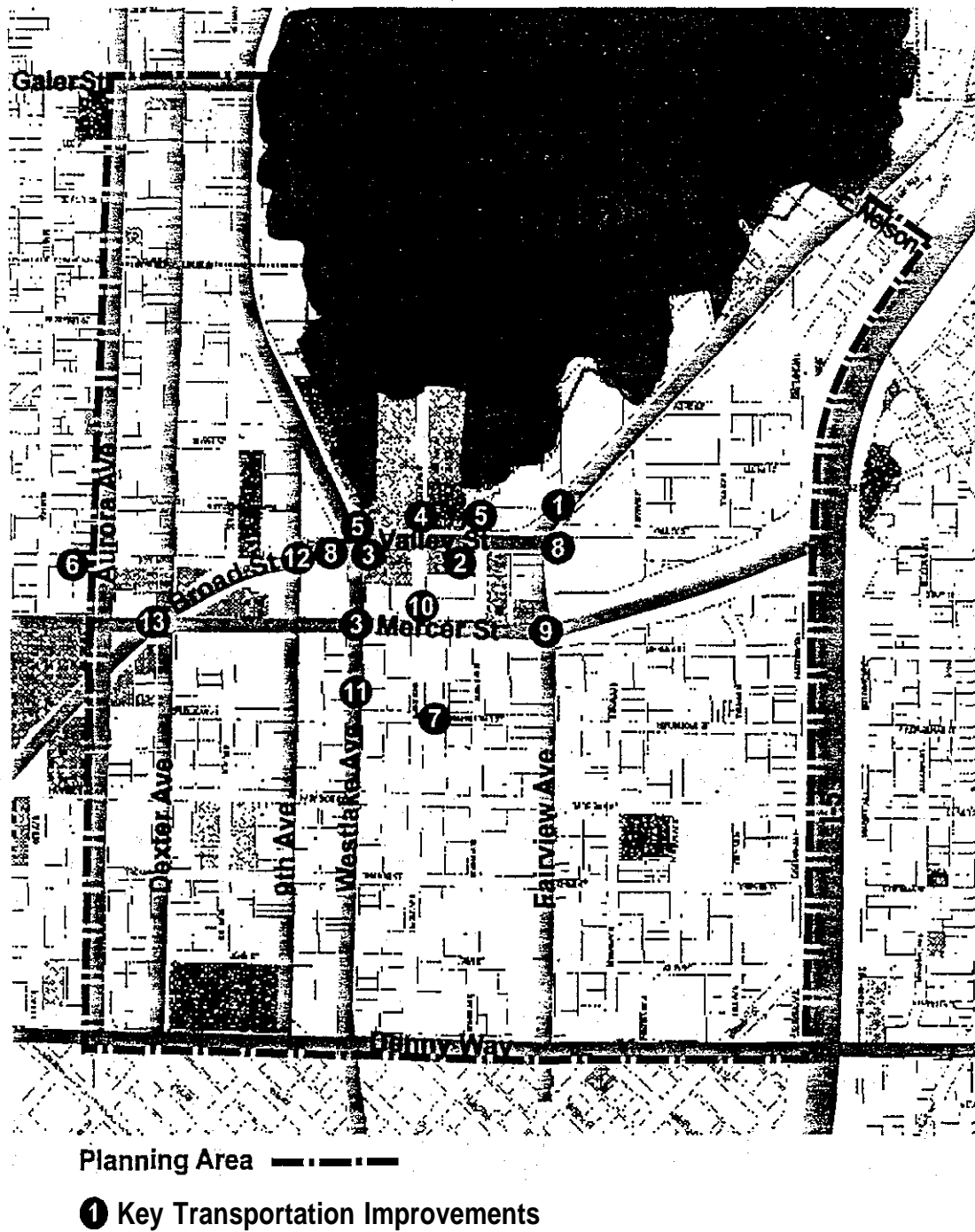
- . Improvement of access to local businesses.
- . The ability to access South Lake Union Park.

- The removal of uncertainty over the properties purchased for the Bay Freeway proposal.
- The ability to provide streetscape improvements in the corridor to address visual and pedestrian needs, and
- The provision of better regional access for properties along the southeast side of Lake Union,

The extensive analysis of the corridor also produced the understanding that a “cross-town” expressway in this corridor did little to address the actual traffic dynamics; was excessively expensive and disruptive, and should be dropped from further consideration as a transportation need. The analysis did produce a set of recommendations that can be implemented individually and incrementally without major disruption to the neighborhood or excessive cost. These recommendations and their location in the neighborhood (see. numbers on Figure 6 on the following page) include:

- Reconstruction of the Valley/Fairview intersection to reduce the westbound left turn angle (1).
- Improve lane definition and rework signage on Valley for westbound traffic (2).
- Improve streetscape on both Mercer and Valley Streets by providing new sidewalks, street trees, street and pedestrian scale lighting and appropriate street furniture (3).
- Construct a pedestrian bridge over Valley Street (probably at Terry Avenue) to connect the proposed parking structure south of Valley with South Lake Union Park (Note: a second pedestrian over-crossing was discussed by the Parks and Open Space committee to better serve the south end of Lake Union) (4).
- Reinforce pedestrian at-grade crossings on Valley Street at Fairview and Westlake Avenue (5).
- Construct a Roy Street undercross or overcross of Aurora for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

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Recommended Transportation Improvements

Figure 6

South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan

Consider other at-grade signalized crossings of Aurora (6).

- Reserve Republican Street as a local east/west business arterial making necessary improvements (e.g. signals at 9th and Westlake) to support this use (7).
- “Encourage METRO to have highly visible transit stations at Fairview/Valley and Westlake/Valley intersections to provide alternative access to South Lake Union Park and waterfront businesses (8).
- Study the feasibility and funding options for a grade separation of the Mercer/Fairview intersection. Feasibility to be determined within six months of plan adoption and funding option twelve months thereafter if project is feasible (9).
- Study adding a signal at Terry Avenue and Mercer Street, and/or, Terry Avenue and Valley Street. Encourage pedestrian access to South Lake Union Park and waterfront businesses via Terry Avenue (10).
- Develop street scape program for Westlake and 9th Avenue (11).
- Study feasibility of adding a left turn signal from eastbound Broad Street to northbound Westlake Avenue North (12).
- Study feasibility of connecting traffic more directly from eastbound Broad Street to Mercer (13).

Pm-king: Planning area parking has become a high-priority issue, not only for South Lake Union Park and waterfront activities, but for the planning area as a whole. On-street parking is heavily utilized to serve business customers and visitor parking needs. In the Cascade neighborhood, on-street parking is over 90% occupied during most hours of the day. A huge portion of employee parking throughout the neighborhood is supplied in off-street lots currently dedicated to, parking. These lots, however, are gradually disappearing as the properties redevelop into more economically productive uses. Therefore, a high priority recommendation is for the city to conduct a comprehensive parking study of the planning area, and to devise a long range parking program. The study should evaluate the desirability/

feasibility of creating a South Lake Union Parking Authority to develop and manage parking resources in support of area businesses and activities.

An immediate priority is to revisit the zoning code for the Cascade neighborhood. It was recently revised to virtually eliminate any requirements for the provision of off street parking for residential development. As part of plan adoption, this must be revised to reinstate parking requirements at least similar to those of surrounding areas north of Denny Way.

Other Considerations for Traffic/Transportation

The South Lake Union Plan supports a comprehensive analysis of Dermey Way corridor. This corridor is a major east/west arterial that links the central waterfront, Lower Queen Anne, the Regrade, Denny Triangle, South Lake Union and Capital Hill. It has never received a thorough analysis to see how it can serve future development in its tributary area or serve for access to abutting properties.

The neighborhood understands and supports the need for additional transit service. Development of a balanced approach between auto and truck access and transit service will be necessary to assure the vitality and prosperity of the neighborhood into the future.

Additional near term and longer term traffic and transit improvements are contained in the Approval and Adoption Matrix. Further analysis of the Mercer/Valley corridor is contained in Attachment “A”.